Tattooing and scarification have been seen as similar in the fact that they both add pigment or texture to the skin. Some people group them together calling them both tattooing.

Tattoos are given to separate people or are used for self expression. A slave would have different markings on their bodies from beatings, and diseases. But they were also branded with the name of their owner to keep the distinction between the slaves. Tattoos were also a form of punishment, Japan mainly used tattoos for punishment. Along with Japan other countries tattooed their criminals and gave them markings to tell them apart from the rest of society. Tattoos are seen in gangs, criminals, and people in the sex services. John Buwler, (Anthropometamorphosis 1653) said that body art on foreigners was a natural form of God’s beauty and his image, while the body art of people living in Egypt, Ethiopia, Brazil and India had “slashed” their bodies. Buwler detested the women and men who wore face paint, and patches on their faces, saying that they were disguising the look of God.

In the beginning of tattooing, tattoos were used as a form of punishment or to show property, but it slowly evolved to show religious observance. It has been viewed both ways, tattoos mean “illiteracy, criminality and paganism” or tattoos show “literacy, Christianity, and a civilized culture”.

Although tattooing was frowned upon by man, some people associated it with witch craft or magical practices.

Tattoos have been dated back to the Ice Man who lived over 5000 years ago, along with goddesses, horsemen and mummies. Archaelogoist have also placed tattooing, body piercing and shaping with artifacts collected from ancient times. One of the most well recorded discoveries of tattooing was from Captain Cook who traveled to the Peruvian coast and witnessed tattooing in a whole different sense. It’s been witnessed that tattoos were a sign of social importance, religious beliefs and personal hobbies and interests.

Criminals were now, not only associated with tattoos but so were sailors, people in carnivals, and people of the lower class. But tattooing was now starting to dominate Europe. Full tattooed people were now becoming famouse, and some nobelmen were even partaking in the fun. After awhile tattooing was no longer associated with criminals, circus folk, or poor people, but was now something that a person from any walk of like could get. It was more of a “fashion statement” and was something that was accepted.

European colonies saw tattooing as a form of segregation, grouping races with races and social statuses with social statuses. People with a lot of body art, and piercings were seen as exotic and strange. Howereve, nowadays, people are starting to mimic the ancient tattoos that are seen in tribes and countries that no longer exist. The Marquesas and the Maori had their revival when their traditional works of art began to inspire people.

Tattooing, piercing and scarification have been grouped together with moderninity and have been becoming increasingly acceptable as the generations move on.